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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
**INFORMATION REPORT**

COUNTRY Turkey

SUBJECT Grain Estimate for 1954/New Meric River Bridge/  
Communications Figures

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1. Preliminary estimates put the 1954 grain harvest at around 10.5 million tons. Although lower than the 1953 bumper crop of 13.6 million tons, this is almost double the crop of 5.38 million tons harvested in 1949 when weather conditions were equally unfavorable, and 1.5 million tons higher than the previous record of 9.08 million tons in 1948.
2. A contract for a new bridge across the Meric (Maritza) River, to be completed in August 1956, was let simultaneously in Ankara and Athens this past week. [REDACTED] The project is a joint Turkish-Greek one and calls for a 2,622 ft reinforced concrete structure, at a cost of US\$1,571,000. Of this amount, Turkey will defray US\$978,000, since 1,455 ft of the new structure will be within Turkish territory. The erection of this bridge will shorten considerably automobile routes between Istanbul and other points in Europe.
3. Figures released by the Turkish Post Office, which also administers the telephone and telegraphic systems of Turkey, indicate a steady increase in the volume and quality of service rendered to the general public. 1953 saw a rise of 73 percent in the number of local telephone calls made in Turkey, and 82 percent in long-distance calls, compared to 1950. Similarly, the number of wire and cable messages went up by 24 percent; and postal volume increased by 37 percent during the same period. There were 111,814 telephone lines in Turkey at the end of 1953, as against 63,336 in 1950. Another 11,800 lines are scheduled to be ready by the end of 1954. The number of towns and cities with telephone exchanges went up from 207 in 1950 to 311 in 1953; a contract has been let to put up 45 new exchanges with a total of 43,680 lines, to be ready in about two years. The increase in the total length of telephone lines was from 11,207 miles to 16,166 miles between 1950-1953. This will have been increased by an additional 1,576 miles by the end of 1954, subject to delivery of materials, of which portions have been ordered from abroad.

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